

Message Text

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ACTION EB-07

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 FEA-01 AEC-05 AID-05 CEA-01

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FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6018

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

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C O N F I D E N T I A L LONDON 15431

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ENRG, UK

SUBJECT: BRITISH VIEWS ON PRODUCER-CONSUMER CONFERENCE

SUMMARY: IN NOVEMBER 22 DISCUSSION WITH ECON COMMUN, DONALD MAITLAND, DEPUTY UNDER SECRETARY, FCO, TOUCHED BRIEFLY ON ENERGY PORTION OF FONSEC CALLAGHAN'S NOVEMBER 19 MEETING WITH FRENCH FONMIN SAUVAGNARGUES. MAITLAND SAID BRITISH NOW BELIEVE US AND FRENCH POSITIONS ON CONSUMER-PRODUCER DIALOGUE ARE NOT AS INCOMPATIBLE AS THEY HAD APPEARED TO BE A WEEK AGO, PRIMARILY BECAUSE OF FRENCH RESPONSE TO REACTIONS OF OTHER COUNTRIES. MAITLAND ALSO EXPRESSED SOME FURTHER PRELIMINARY THOUGHTS ON WAYS TO APPROACH CONFERENCE

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PROBLEM. END SUMMARY

1. IN CONVERSATION WITH ECON COMMUN, MAITLAND TOUCHED ONLY BRIEFLY ON ENERGY PORTION OF CALLAGHAN'S NOVEMBER 19 MEETING WITH SAUVAGNARGUES. MOST IMPORTANT POINT WAS BRITISH BELIEF THAT US AND FRENCH POSITIONS ON A CONSUMER-PRODUCER CONFERENCE WERE NOT AS INCOMPATIBLE AS THEY HAD APPEARED A WEEK AGO. FRENCH HAD NOW ACCEPTED THAT THEIR TIMETABLE WOULD SLIP AND APPEARED MORE AMENABLE TO COOPERATION WITH REST OF THE WEST, THOUGH HOW THIS WOULD BE DONE REMAINS UNCLEAR.

2. MAITLAND VOLUNTEERED VIEW THAT FRENCH POSITION HAD CHANGED IN RESPONSE TO REACTIONS FROM ABROAD, AND IT WAS NOT IN OUR INTEREST TO STOP THIS PROCESS. ACCORDING TO MAITLAND, FRENCH WERE MOTIVATED IN PRESSING FOR EARLY MEETING BY BELIEF THAT JUST GETTING IN CONTACT MIGHT HAVE FAVORABLE EFFECT IN SLOWING DOWN ADVERSE DECISIONS TAKEN BY PRODUCERS. GOF WAS STILL THINKING IN TERMS OF PREPARATORY MEETING WHICH MIGHT PUT DIFFICULT PROBLEMS INTO FOCUS. HE COMMENTED THAT, THEREAFTER, A HIGH DEGREE OF CONCERTATION WOULD BE NEEDED IF CONSUMERS WERE TO AVOID BEING PICKED OFF ONE BY ONE BY PRODUCERS.

3. MAITLAND SAID UK'S PRELIMINARY CONCLUSIONS, AFTER REVIEWING US AND FRENCH IDEAS, WERE THAT AS A PRACTICAL MATTER THERE PROBABLY WOULD NOT BE ANY NEATLY ARRANGED PREPARATORY STAGE FOLLOWED BY A CONSUMER-PRODUCER CONFERENCE. CONSUMERS PROBABLY WOULD ENTER INTO NEGOTIATIONS, SHAPE OF WHICH IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO PREJUDGE, OVER A PERIOD OF 18 MONTHS OR SO IN VARIOUS FORA. END RESULT MIGHT BE EQUITABLE DEAL ON TRADE AND ENERGY.

4. MAITLAND WAS ATTRACTED TO POSSIBILITY OF BEGINNING CONTACTS WITH PRODUCERS WHILE AT SAME TIME AGREEING ON CONSUMER SOLIDARITY MEASURES. HE NOTED SECRETARY KISSINGER HAD SAID CONSUMERS SHOULD ADOPT AGREED PROGRAM AND POSTURE BUT DID NOT SAY PROGRAM ACTUALLY HAD TO BE ACCOMPLISHED BEFORE TALKING TO PRODUCERS. MAITLAND REITERATED BELIEF THERE DID NOT SEEM TO BE MUCH DIFFERENCE BETWEEN FRANCE AND US AND HOPED MARTINIQUE
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MEETING WOULD BE HELPFUL ON THIS ISSUE. ECON COMMUN AGREED BUT NOTED IT WOULD BE DIFFICULT TO AGREE ON A SPECIFIC TIME FOR A CONFERENCE, AS FRENCH APPARENTLY WANT, UNTIL CONSUMER WORK HAS PROGRESSED FURTHER AND CONDITIONS CONDUCIVE TO SUCCESS OF CONFERENCE ESTABLISHED.

5. MAITLAND SUGGESTED IEA AND GROUP OF TEN MIGHT WORK ON CONSUMER SOLIDARITY MEASURES AND RECYCLING BEHIND THE SCENES WHILE PREPARATORY MEETING(S) PROCEED. HE HOPED SECYS KISSINGER AND CALLAGHAN MIGHT DISCUSS THESE

MATTERS AT DECEMBER 14-15 NATO MEETING, NOTING THAT HMG
WILL REFINER THOUGHTS AT OFFICIAL LEVEL BEFORE THEN.

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